Exhibit A

Microsoft Confidential – Communicated Under NDA

Summary

In response to OEM customer and industry partner feedback, Microsoft is making two changes to the guidelines of the Windows Vista™ Capable PC Program (Program). This communication provides information regarding these changes as well as an updated Marketing Bulletin reflecting these changes to the Program.

Details

- The two changes being made to the Program are in the area of Technical Requirements and Windows Vista Capable PC system availability in OEM distribution channels. All other dates and Program requirements remain the same.

    o We have removed the technical requirement that a Windows Vista Capable PC contain a Graphics Processor Unit (GPU) that supports the Windows Display Driver Model (WDDM), formerly known as the Longhorn Display Driver Model.

    o We have advanced the date that OEM systems containing the Windows Vista Capable logo may appear worldwide at retail from May 1, 2006 to April 1, 2006. This will provide OEMs with a longer lead time to ensure that their retail partners have adequate inventory of Windows Vista Capable systems prior to the worldwide promotional start date of June 1, 2006.

Background

- Microsoft designed the Program to maintain Microsoft® Windows® XP PC sales momentum while escalating Windows Vista buzz and to maximize PCs capable of running Windows Vista in the channel at launch.

    o We have received considerable press, partner, and industry feedback that we need to provide clear and consistent customer messaging regarding system requirements to upgrade to Windows Vista.

    o We have also had partner feedback on the desire to advance the lead times for the Program to meet retail stocking windows and ensure that the Program is well established prior to the escalation of excitement that will start with Windows Vista Beta 2 availability in Spring 2006.

    o Feedback has also strongly highlighted the need to increase the number of existing systems designated as Windows Vista Capable and carrying the Windows Vista Capable Logo.

- In order to help further drive PC sales prior to Windows Vista launch while providing clear customer messaging, Microsoft is making two changes to the Program. These changes match Windows Vista Capable PCs with the simple concept that "systems can run Windows Vista". The changes are:

    o WDDM support for graphics is now a recommended, but not required, technical criteria for Windows Vista Capable PCs.

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- We believe that WDDM is an important aspect of the Windows Vista PC experience.

- WDDM is a recommended, not a required criteria for Windows Vista Capable.

- WDDM is still required for both Designed for Windows Vista Basic Logo and Designed for Windows Vista Premium Logo.

- WDDM is also required to enable some of the key features in Windows Vista (e.g., Flip, Flip 3D, Aero-Glass, DPI Scaling, etc.).

- Microsoft is committed to providing ways for end users to know what PC systems will get an enhanced experience when they upgrade to Windows Vista on PCs that have a WDDM-capable GPU. We are currently looking into various means of doing this, including the Upgrade Advisor.

- Microsoft strongly recommends that OEMs carefully consider their product ranges to ensure the best possible customer experience for the Windows Vista upgrade, balanced against component and roadmap plans for Spring and Summer 2006.

- PCs with the Windows Vista Capable Logo may appear in retail beginning April 1, 2006.

  o This change from the original date of May 1, 2006 is designed to better map to standard PC refresh cycles.

  o This also provides a longer lead time on Windows Vista Capable Systems prior to the promotional start date of June 1, 2006 worldwide.

Related Areas that are NOT changing

- Windows Vista Basic logo requirements - still require WDDM driver with compatible graphics hardware to improve graphics stability, multi-application performance, and monitor hot-plugging.

- Windows Vista Premium logo requirements – still require WDDM driver with sufficient graphics hardware to enable Desktop Window Manager (DWM) and Aero.

- All other aspects of the Windows Vista logo programs remain unchanged. The Marketing Bulletin reflects the two updates outlined above to the Windows Vista Capable PC program.

Good Better Best

- The modified programs above now deliver a simplified message to consumers:

- Windows Vista Capable PCs - including those with the logo and those meeting easily understood requirements of a modern CPU and 512MB of RAM – will have a *good* experience, at least equivalent to Windows XP, when upgraded to Windows Vista.

- *Better* graphics experiences, including better graphics stability, multi-application performance, and monitor hot-plugging, will be available in all versions of Windows Vista for PCs that have graphics hardware compatible with WDDM.

- The *best* graphics experiences - including Aero Glass, Flip and Flip 3D - will be available to users who install premium versions of Windows Vista on PCs with more capable graphics hardware that support a WDDM driver, DWM, and Aero.

- The Windows Vista Upgrade Advisor will be available for download from Microsoft for pre-purchase use to determine the level of graphics experience that a given PC configuration will deliver to consumers.

Updated Key Date Summary

- **April 1, 2006** - Program launches in Japan. Due to the unique PC market seasonality, the Program begins two months earlier in Japan than in the rest of the world.

- **April 1, 2006** - OEM systems containing the Windows Vista Capable logo may appear worldwide at retail.

- **June 1, 2006** – Worldwide Program launch. OEMs and their channel partners can start marketing and promoting eligible PCs as Windows Vista Capable.

- **30 Days Prior to Launch of Windows Vista** - Windows Vista Capable PC Launch Upgrade Promotion (Launch Upgrade Promotion) begins.

- **January 31, 2007** – End of all Program and Launch Upgrade Promotion activities in all channels.

Resources
Windows Vista Capable PC resources are available to OEMs on the OEM Communications Extranet (OCE) at https://oem.partners.extranet.microsoft.com/oem.

From the navigation bar, go to: | Product Information | Desktop Operating System Products | Windows Vista | Capable PC Program |.

- OEM Marketing Bulletin - Windows Vista Capable PC Program

- Windows Vista Capable PC Marketing Bulletin Now Available – December 20, 2005 Announcement

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Questions
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